Edited by
Edith Sitwell

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WHEELS, 1920

(FIFTH CYCLE)

EDITED BY EDITH SITWELL

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WHEELS
1920
FIFTH CYCLE
OSBERT SITWELL
SACHEVERELL SITWELL
EDITH SITWELL
ALDOUS HUXLEY
JOHN ADAMS
SHERARD VINES
M. TAVISH COHEN
GEOFFREY COOKSON
ALAN PORTER
R. KEAN SEYMOUR
WYNDHAM LEWIS
LONDON
LEONARD PARSONS

First published October 1920

Leonard Parsons, Ltd,

WE DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

MRS. ARNOLD BENNETT

(MADEMOISELLE HÉBRARD)

POETRY'S GREATEST INTERPRETATIVE ARTIST.

511544

ENGLISH

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CORNUCOPIA.

To Edith.

NOW music fills the night with moving shades;
Its velvet darkness, veinèd like a grape,
Obscures and falls round many a subtle shape
—Figures that steal through cool tall colonnades,
Vast minotaurian corridors of sleep;
Rhythmic they pass us, splashed by red cascades
Of wine, fierce-flashing fountains whose proud waves
Shimmer awhile; plunge foaming over steep
Age-polished rocks, into the dim cold caves
Of starlit dusk below—then merge with night,
Softly as children sinking into sleep.

But now more figures sway into our sight;
Strong and bare-shouldered, pressed and laden down
Stagger across the terraces. They bear
Great cornucopia of summer fruit
And heavy roses scented with the noon
—Piled up with fruit and blossoms, all full blown,

Cornucopia.

Crimson, or golden as the harvest moon—
Piled up and overflowing in a flood
Of riches; brilliant-plumaged birds, that sing
As the faint playing on a far sweet lute,
Warble their tales of conquest and of love;
Perch on each shoulder; sweep each rainbow wing
Like lightning through the breathless dark above.
Heaped up in vases gems shine hard and bright;
Sudden they flare out—gleaming red like blood—
For now the darkness turns to swelling light,
Great torches gild each shadow, tear the sky,
As drums tear through the silence of the night;
Breaking its crystal quiet—making us cry
Or catch our sobbing breath in sudden fear.
A shadow stumbles, and the jewels shower
On to the pavers with a sharp sweet sound.
They mingle with the fountain drops that flower
Up in a scarlet bloom above the ground,
A beauteous changing blossom; then they rain
On to the broad mysterious terraces
Where sea-gods rise to watch in cold disdain
Before those vast vermilion palaces,
—Watch where the slumbering coral gods of noon,
Drunk with the sudden golden light and flare
Of flaming torches, try to pluck and tear
That wan enchanted lotus flower, the moon,
Down from its calm still waters; thus they fall,
Like flowing plumes, the fountains of our festival.

Cornucopia.

Slowly the torches die. They echo long,
These last notes of a Bacchanalian song,
Of drifting drowsy beauty, born of sleep,
—Vast as the sea, as changing and as deep.
In thanksgiving for shelt'ring summer skies
Still, far away, a fervent red light glows.
Small winds brush past against our lips and eyes,
Caress them like a laughing summer rose,
And rainbow moths flit by, in circling flight.
A harp sobs out its crystal syruppings;
Faintly it sounds, as the poor petal-wings,
Fragile yet radiant, of a butterfly
Beating against the barriers of night.

Then from the Ocean came the Syren song,
Heavy with perfume, yet faint as a sigh,
Kissing our minds, and changing right from wrong;
Chaining our limbs; making our bodies seem
Inert and spellbound, dead as in a dream.

CHURCH PARADE.

THE flattened sea is harsh and blue—
Lies stiff beneath—one tone, one hue,

While concertina waves unfold
The painted shimmering sands of gold.

Each bird that whirls and wheels on high
Must strangle, stifle in, its cry,

For nothing that's of Nature born
Should seem so on the Sabbath morn.

The terrace glitters hard and white,
Bedaubed and flecked with points of light

That flicker at the passers-by—
Reproachful as a curate's eye.

And china flowers, in steel-bound beds,
Flare out in blues and flaming reds;

Each blossom, rich and opulent,
Stands like a soldier; and its scent

Is turned to camphor in the air.
No breath of wind would ever dare

To make the trees' plump branches sway,
Whose thick green leaves hang down to pray.

Church Parade.

The stiff, tall churches vomit out
Their rustling masses of devout,

Tall churches whose stained Gothic night
Refuses to receive the light!

Watch how the stately walk along
Toward the terrace, join the throng,

That paces carefully up and down
Above a cut-out cardboard town!

With prayer-book rigid in each hand,
They look below at sea and sand.

The round contentment in their eyes
Betrays their favourite fond surmise,

That all successful at a trade
Shall tread an eternal Church Parade,

And every soul that's sleek and fat
Shall gain a heavenly top-hat.

From out the Church's Gothic night,
Past beds of blossoms china bright,

Beneath the green trees' porous shade,
We watch the sea-side Church Parade.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

THE gilt-fring'd earth has sadly spun
A sector of its lucent arc
About the disillusioned Sun
Of Autumn. The bright, angry spark

Of Heaven in each upturned eye
Denotes religious ecstasy.

We, too, have spun our Sunday round
Of Church and beef and after-sleep
In houses where obtrudes no sound
But breathing, regular and deep.

Till Sabbath sentiment, well-fed,
Demands a visit to the Dead.

For Autumn leaves sad thoughts beget,
As from life's tree they clatter down,
And Death has caught some in her net
Even on Sunday—in this Town,

Tho' money and food and sleep are sweet !
The dead leaves rattle down the street.

Fat bodies, silk-enmeshed, inflate
Their way along; if Death comes soon
They'll leave this food-sweet earth to float
Heavenward, like some huge balloon.

Sunday Afternoon.

Religion dims each vacant eye
As we approach the cemet'ry.

Proudly we walk; with care we bend
To lead our children by the hand,
Here, where all, rich and poor, must end
—This portal to a better land

To which, if in good business,
All have hereditary access,

Where to afford the Saints relief
From prayer and from religious questions,
Round after round of deathless beef
Flatters celestial digestions.

Where, in white robe, with golden crown,
We watch our enemies sent down,

To other spheres, while we lean out
Divinest pity in our eyes,
And wonder why these sinners flout
Our kindly pitying surprise,

Why look so angry when we play
On gold harps as they go away,

A hymn tune, dear, familiar?
But now we stand within the space,
Where marble females drape a tear
Above a whisker'd marble face.

"Isn't it pretty?" Even now
Rich and exotic blossoms grow

About each granite monument
Of worthy men, all fully drest,
And, for some slight emolument,
A weeping willow guards our rest.

Look! Over there a broken column
Is watched by one geranium,

Whose scorching scarlet tones uphold
Damnation and eternal fire
To those who will not reckon gold—
Who are not worthy of their hire,

For marble tombs are prized above
Such brittle things as thoughts or love.

The crystal web of dusk now clings
From evergreen to tropic tree,
Toss'd by the wind that subtly brings
A mingled scent of mould and tea,

That causes silence to be rent
By one scream—childish, but intent.

For children will not realise
That they should rest without a sound
With folded hands and downcast eye
Here, in the Saints' recruiting ground.

And so, in sorrow, we turn back
To hasten on our high-tea track.

But after, in the night, we dream
Of Heaven as a marbled bank,
In which in our continual stream
We give our gold for heavenly rank,

Where each Saint, standing like a sentry,
Explains a mystic double-entry.

The Director of the Bank is God—
Stares our foes coldly in the face,
But gives us quite a friendly nod,
And beckons us to share His place.

DE LUXE.

I

Hymn.

ABOVE from plaster-mountains,
Wine-shadowed by the sea,
Spurt white-wool clouds, as fountains
Whirl from a rockery.

These clouds were surely given
To keep the hills from harm,
For when a cloud is riven
The fatted rain falls warm.

Through porous leaves the sun drops
Each dripping stalactite
Of green. The chiselled tree-tops
Seem cut from malachite.

Stiff leaves with ragged edges
(Each one a wooden sword)
Are carved to prickly hedges,
On which, with one accord,

Their clock-work songs of calf-love
Stout birds stop to recite,
From cages which the sun wove
Of shade and latticed light.

Each brittle booth and joy-store
Shines brightly. Below these
The ocean at a toy shore
Yaps like a Pekinese.

II

Nursery Rhyme

THE dusky king of Malabar
Is chief of Eastern Potentates;
Yet he wears no clothes except
The jewels that decency dictates.

A thousand Malabaric wives
Roam beneath green-tufted palms;
Revel in the vileness
That Bishop Heber psalms.

From honey-combs of light and shade
They stop to watch black bodies dart
Into the sea to search for pearls.
By means of diabolic art

De Luxe.

Magicians keep the sharks away;
Mutter, utter, each dark spell,
So that if a thief should steal,
One more black would go to Hell.

But Mrs. Freudenthal, in furs,
From brioche dreams to mild surprise
Awakes; the music throbs and purrs.
The 'cellist, with albino eyes,

Rivets attention; is, in fact,
The very climax; pink eyes flash
Whenever nervous and pain-racked
He hears the drums and cymbals clash.

Mrs. Freudenthal day-dreams
—Ice-spoon half-way to her nose—
Till the girl in ochre screams,
Hits out at the girl in rose.

This is not at all the way
To act in large and smart hotels;
Angrily the couples sway,
Eagerly the riot swells.

Girls who cannot act with grace
Should learn behaviour; stay at home;
A convent is the proper place.
Why not join the Church of Rome?

De Luxe.

A waiter nearly drops the tray
—Twenty tea-cups in one hand.
Now the band joins in the fray,
Fighting for the Promised Land.

Mrs. Freudenthal resents
The scene; and slowly rustles out,
But the orchestra relents,
Waking from its fever-bout.

AT THE HOUSE OF MRS. KINFOOT.

AT the house of Mrs. Kinfoot
Are collected
Men and women
Of all ages.
They are supposed
To sing, paint, or to play the piano.
In the drawing-room
The fireplace is set
With green tiles
Of an acanthus pattern.
The black curls of Mrs. Kinfoot
Are symmetrical.
—Descended, it is said,
From the Kings of Ethiopia—
But the British bourgeoisie has triumphed.
Mr. Kinfoot is bald
And talks
In front of the fireplace
With his head on one side,
And his right hand
In his pocket.

At the House of Mrs. Kinfoot.

The joy of catching tame elephants,
And finding them to be white ones,
Still gleams from the jungle-eyes
Of Mrs. Kinfoot,
But her mind is no jungle
Of Ethiopia,
But a sound British meadow.

Listen then to the gospel of Mrs. Kinfoot :
" The world was made for the British bourgeoisie,
They are its Swiss Family Robinson ;
The world is not what it was.
We cannot understand all this unrest !

Adam and Eve were born to evening dress
In the southern confines
Of Belgravia.
Eve was very artistic, and all that,
And felt the fall
Quite dreadfully.
Cain was such a man of the world
And belonged to every club in London ;
His father simply adored him,
—But had never really liked Abel,
Who was rather a milk-sop.
Nothing exists which the British bourgeoisie
Does not understand ;
Therefore there is no death
—And, of course, no life.

At the House of Mrs. Kinfoot.

The British bourgeoisie
Is not born,
And does not die,
But, if it is ill,
It has a frightened look in its eyes.

The War was splendid, wasn't it?
Oh yes, splendid, splendid."

Mrs. Kinfoot is a dear,
And so artistic.

MALGRÉ LUI.

THE voices weave a web of futile sound;
A fan is dropped by Lady Carabas;
Restored to her; but Mrs. Kinfoot frowned,
Guarding the door, as Cerberus his pass.

But suddenly great waves of sound obtrude
Upon the pleasant party in this room;
While we enjoy the music's interlude,
Outside there swells the trumpet call of doom.

Mosaic tombs or unmarked graves—asunder
They all are rent. King Dodon from the dead
Arises; while the quivering heavens thunder,
He smoothes his robe, and calmly shakes his head

Free of the ages' dust; but now the voices
Of those condemned (for judgment will not tarry)
Shrill out in woe; but one, alone, rejoices,
For Mrs. Kinfoot scents another quarry.

The army of the dead are on the march
To meet their Maker on His ivory throne.
He sits beneath the rainbow's radiant arch,
Dispensing judgment. Oh, atone, atone!

But Mrs. Kinfoot saw a sailor-sinner
—With one arm—leave St. Paul's and walk away;
And Mrs. Kinfoot longed to give a dinner
"To meet the Judge upon the Judgment Day!"

. . . . . .

Above God's Head a dozen suns kept guard
Like sentinels. Her erring feet were led
Up to a crowded hill, where God's regard
Was fixed upon her, and He gravely said:

"Anne Kinfoot, worthy mother and good wife,
Your weakness and your faults are all forgiven.
Go you, my child, to everlasting life,
And take your husband also up to heaven."

But she could see the Counsellors and Kings
And brilliant bearers of a famous name,
Tangled with snakes and horrid crawling things,
Sent down to torture and eternal flame.

Then Mrs. Kinfoot lied in agony: "Oh Lord,
I am as others of my class and station."
She cried: "Oh, have me bound and burnt and gored,
Oh, send me down to suffer my damnation!

I swear I beat my children." Oh! despondent
She was. "I am a sinner; I will tell
How I escaped a ducal co-respondent
Last year. My God, I must insist on Hell!"

But the great Judge was not deceived. He knew
The worthy virtue of the Kinfoot line;
Yet as she went to heaven, constant, true,
To principle, she murmured: "Will you dine

To meet . . ." But dragged away, she dwells on high
And notes, but rather disapproves, the eccentricity
Of Saints and early Christians who try
To lessen the burden of her domesticity.

She has to play upon a golden harp,
Join in the chorus of the heavenly choir;
Her answers to the Saints are sometimes sharp,
She longs to singe her wings and share the fire.

Night never comes—so when she tries to flee
To that perpetual party down below,
The angels catch her, shouting out with glee
"Dear Mrs. Kinfoot. You are good!
. . . We know!"

FROM "THE VALLEY OF THE GIANTS."

WE climbed beneath the tropic trees; like swords
Their leaves unfold; their limbs bear swelling gourds
Like tumours, bearing blossoms that transcribe
The wicked flicker of the insect tribe,
Who, drunk with heavy honey as with gore,
Crawl on the fleshy petals, till the roar
Of some huge creature, that proud and alone
Prowls in the forest, rouses them to drone;
Within the venomed mesh of this rank mane
Flash sequined birds that tear the air in twain,
And flecked with fierce green light, the hot ground seethes
With buzzing furious sound as if it breathes
In fever; still we climb the cone-shaped hill
Till suddenly the living world is still.

. . . . . .

The blood-red curtain of the sun is torn
Aside, and through it there is faintly borne
The slumbering night, until there fell around
A silence that meant more than any sound.

Then like a waterfall did darkness come
With splashing of cool winds that seemed like foam,
And in the dim pavilions above
The crooning turtle who acclaims his love
Is rocked as on a wave, and looks below
In wonder; do the rippling waters flow
There with sweet movement, will he see there soon,
Clearly reflected, the refulgent moon?
Now those more arrogant birds that peck'd the fruit
Gilded by sunlight, are ashamed and mute—
Just as their jewelled plumes that caught the stark
Crude daylight colours, now fade into dark,
While the dear humble dove bears on its wings
The sheen that moonlight to deep water brings,
And those proud flowers, like open wounds and spears
Are hid by darkness; with its welling tears
The dew has washed them, and we only see
The pallid blossoms that again set free
Nocturnal sweetness, until now closed up
Within the ivory prison of each cup.
For here each evening when dusk falls, the flowers
Are rung by gentle winds as bells in towers
Till in each chalice, white and open wide,
The dew-reflected stars tremble and hide;
For night, more cruel than the cruel day,
Hides and dissembles, makes the moonbeam play
In velvet soothing softness, on that strife
Of trees and living things that men call life.

MRS. FREUDENTHAL CONSULTS THE WITCH OF ENDOR . . .

A NOSE, however aquiline,
Escapes detection in a throng;
So she hopes; but sense of sin
Made her shrink and steal along

Streets glazed by mocking summer heat
To semblance of a cool canal,
Where iridescent insects beat
Their wings upon the liquid wall;

Where radiant insects, carrion-fed,
Buzz and flutter busily,
Smile, or frown, or nod the head,
Expressing some familiar lie.

Enter the house, ascend the stair!
Consult the scintillating ball.
Beatrice Freudenthal, beware!
Eve felt like you before the Fall.

Within the shining mystic globe
Lies luck at bridge, or martyr's crown;
A modern prophetess will probe
The future, for one guinea down.

For that amount, the future's sword
From crystal scabbard she will drag.
She can unpack the future's hoard
As we unpack a Gladstone bag.

. . . . . .

Without the agency of man,
Solely by fasting and by prayer,
The wizards of old Jenghiz Khan
Could move a wine-cup through the air

Until it reached him; and he drank
Fermented juice of rye or grape;
The cup flew back; his courtiers shrank
Away, astonished and agape.

Before the Llama turns to grapple
With State Affairs, he learns to spin
(Despite Sir Isaac Newton's Apple)
In mid-air, sixty times—to win

Amusement mixed with approbation
From sceptical ambassadors
—For any kind of levitation
Increases prestige with the Powers.

Such things were practised—did not tend
To promote war or anarchy—
Yet now such things would even end
A Constitutional Monarchy.

Mrs. Freudenthal Consults the Witch of Endor.

Magic for a holy race
Is surely wrong; how strictly hidden
The future in its crystal case
Lies (oh, so near)! and yet forbidden.

Though Gentile kings upon their thrones
May weave a spell, or dance like Tich,
Yet ponder on the bleaching bones
Of Saul, who sought the Endor Witch.

THEATRE OF VARIETIES.

CIRCLE on circle the hanging gardens descend,
Slope from the upper darkness, each flower face
Open, turned to the light and laughter and life
Trembling heat, quicken and awake the air.
Flutes and crying of strings assail the sense—
Music, the revelation and marvellous lie;
What is, what is not, truth and falsehood,
Swim and mingle together.
On the bright trestles tumblers, tamers of beasts,
Dancers and clowns affirm their fury of life,
And in a thousand minds beget a thousand
Hallucinations, dreams of beauty, nightmares.

"The World-renowned Van Hogen Mogen in
The Master Mystery of Modern Times. . . ."
He talks, he talks; more powerfully than music
His quick words hammer on the minds of men.
"Observe this hat, Ladies and gentlemen;
Empty, observe, empty as the universe
Before the Head for which this Hat is made
Was, or could think. Empty—observe, observe. . . ."

Theatre of Varieties.

The rabbit kicks; a bunch of paper flowers
Blossoms in the limelight; paper tape unrolls,
Endless, a clue. "Ladies and gentlemen . . . ."
Sharp, sharp on malleable minds his words
Hammer. The little Indian boy
Enters the basket. Bright, an Ethiop's sword
Transfixes it and bleeding is withdrawn.
Horror, like a magnet, draws the watching crowds
Toward the scene of massacre. The walls
Bend forward to the revealing light,
And the pale faces are a thousand gargoyles
Thrust out, spouting the ichor of their souls.
"Ladies and gentlemen," the great Van Hogen Mogen
Smiles and is kind. A puddle of dark blood
Creeps slowly out. "The irremediable
Has ceased to be."
Empty of all but blood the basket gapes.
"Arise!" he calls and blows his horn. "Arise!"
Bird-like from the highest gallery
The little Indian answers.
Shout upon shout, the hanging gardens reverberate.
Happy because the irremediable is healed,
Happy because they have seen the impossible,
Because they are freed from the dull daily law,
They shout, they shout. And great Van Hogen Mogen
Modestly bows, graciously smiles. The band
Confirms the lie with loud triumphant blasts.
The curtain falls. How quickly the walls recede

And the stretched gargoyles re-become
Women and men! who fill the warm thick air
With rumour of their loves and discontents.
Not suffering even great Hogen Mogen,
Begetter of rabbits out of empty hats,
Scorner of nature, raiser from the dead,
To invade the sanctities of private life.

The lamps once more expire and the red curtain
Glows like a hearth behind the kindled ramp.
The hearth dissolves.
God's eyes of limelight grope about the darkness,
Cross squinting, squinting apart with splayed regard,
Focus at last unanimously
A pearly vision with an open mouth,
Source of a sugared fountain.
See, as she sings, the eyes of God change colour,
Voluptuously incarnadined with red,
Then green for horror, purple with condolence.
Then, at a blink, go out, disquietingly.
She sings—Oh, revelation and marvellous lie—
Till Picardy blooms nothing but perfumed roses,
With never a rotting corpse in all its earth.

The Six Aerial Sisters Polpetini
Dive from trapeze to far trapeze
With all the clockwork certainty of stars.
About his head Sclopis, the juggler, keeps

Theatre of Varieties.

In unremitting planetary dance
A little host of silver spheres,
And ever quicklier throwing, throwing, throwing,
Builds up a solid arch of movement.
If he should drop an atom? or if they
Lose hold too soon and fall?
But they can never fail; for if they did
What breath of panic would shake the pale flower faces
That in the hanging gardens tranquilly bloom.
Professor Chubb's Automaton performs
Upon the viols and virginals, plays chess,
Ombre and loo, mistigri, tric-trac, pushpin,
Sings Lilliburlero in falsetto, answers
All questions put to it, and with its rubber feet
Noiselessly dances the antique heydiguy.
"Is it a man?" the terrible infant asks.
And "No" they say whose business it is
To say such infants no. And "No" again
They shout when after watching Dobbs and Debs
Step simultaneously through intricate dances,
Hammer the same tune with their rattling clogs
In faultless unison, the infant wondering asks,
"And they, are they machines?"

Music, the revelation and marvellous lie,
Rebuilds in the minds of all a suave and curving
Kingdom of Heaven; under God's bright eyes
An angel walks and with one rolling glance

Blesses, sun-like, each flower in the hanging gardens.
Oh, heavenly smile and god-illumined glances,
Hair of gold and marble brow,
And silken comeliness of limb!
"Divine!" they say, having no words by which
To call a spade a spade, Divine Xenocrate!
Beauty being mysterious is therefore God,
And love a pleasure indescribable,
Is God again, and awe, the dark abyss
Where words fall wingless and lampless, is also God!
Xenocrate, divine Xenocrate!
"Father," the terrible infant's voice is shrill,
"Why does the lady wear no skirts?"
She wears no skirts, God's eyes have never been brighter,
The face flowers open in her emanation,
Xenocrate, sun-like Xenocrate!—
She is the suave and curving Kingdom of Heaven
Made manifest to the eyes. Xenocrate!
Her belly is like a mound of wheat, her breasts
Are towers, her hair like a flock of goats.
"Her foot is feat with diamond toes
And she on legs of ruby goes. . . ."
Xenocrate, divine Xenocrate!
The face flowers rustle in the flagellant wind
Of her loud singing. A poet in the pit
Jots down, in tears, the words of her Siren song.
"So every spirit as it is most pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,

So it the rarer body doth procure
To habit in, and is more fairly dight
With cheerful grace and amiable sight:
For of the soul the body form doth take;
And soul is form and doth the body make."
—" Now boys, together! All with me!"
" For of the soul the body form doth take;— . . .
Together, boys, together!
And soul is form and doth the body make."
Xenocrate, alone, alone divine!

" God save the King." Music's last practical joke
Still sounding in their ears, bugling of glory,
The folk stream out into the soft damp darkness
Of Saturday night in Camden Town.
Already next week's bills are being posted:—
Urim and Thummim, cross-talk comedians,
Ringpok, the Magian of Thibet,
The Two Bedelias, Ruby and Truby Dicks,
Sam Foy and Troupe of Serio-Comic Cyclists . . .
Infinite in resource, each week from now till doomsday,
The Theatre of Varieties offers something new.
Twice nightly every evening from now till doomsday
Its hanging gardens, bedded with pale flower faces,
Will echo with ever new delight,
While on the shining trestles tumblers, tamers of beasts,
Dancers and clowns will affirm in strange new ways
Their everlasting fury of life.

HARD OF HEARING.

ONCE in April ways
I heard the cuckoo call.
Among more withering days
Haulms twitched and clicked with heat.
I heard the bumping fall
Of yellow plums. My feet
Drew bickerings from the grass
Like thunder-rain on roofs,
Or clattered arms of brass.
Horses' battering hoofs
Ring no louder now
Than once a distant stream.
The grasshopper's old-hussif row
Dies to remembered dream.

In bygone days I heard
The swinging dewberry scratch
To the flurried flight of a bird,
Nor found it hard to catch
The plashy drop when a trout
Came bowbent leaping out.

Hard of Hearing.

I heard from pools and bogs
The little, barking frogs.
Clapping water-weeds,
The hiss of sand-wasps' wings,
Wind-brattled campion seeds,
Were close familiar things.
Now nature's musics half are fled;
And half my heart is dead.

LOVERS.

FLAT streams of light flow ribboning the road.
More black along the black new-rained-in air
Love-coupled shades feel comfortable flesh.

The tree-tops lift their Atlantean load,
And, though they mutter, let no pinpoint-flare
Fall with a plum-plop through the leafy mesh.

Across the gloom two faces leap, and I
Am dizzied. Their how more than moony power,
Brighter than lamp-lit gleaming awes me mute.

Are lovers fledged by flesh for this lark-high,
Pure, candid flight? Do bodily beauties flower
To ripe a strange and spiritual fruit?

BLIND.

AN old man, tap, tap, tapping went
A thin, beech-broken way.
So many straight, unheedful trees
Before his footing lay,
That turn or stumble where he would
He blundered full against a tree.
He did not seem to care; but, oh,
Bitter, bitter, it was to me.

CHILD'S SONG.

MY mother was a harlot,
My father was a clerk;
My mother wore scarlet,
My father a coat dark.

They met once only,
Parted at morn—
But from that lone lie
Was I born.

When she grew bigger,
Mother in dread
Pinched in her figure,
Bore me dead.

They buried my body
Deep in a hole,
And prayed to God He
Would save my soul.

TIME.

(*From the French.*)

TIME'S horny nail the flesh of beauty flays;
And round dumb lips grown weary of sweet lays
Graves deep the line to tell where laughter died.
Blood curdles in the porphyry's veinèd pride;
Day turns to ashes, heaven to marble cold;
A trunk, all gnarled, the Dryad's limbs enfold;
The silvery voice in mocking echo calls:
Thy flask an urn, a sepulchre thy halls,
Thy weeping soul with sad winds swept along,
Of flesh and blood, of laughter and of song,
Of airy thought, what symbol shapes the close?
A dove upon the wing, a ruined rose.

MIST AND CLOUD.

ALL Hellas in that rift !
The vapours part, and straightway I look through
Into a land that laughs beneath the blue,
Cloud-frontiered, rainbow barred,
Thessalian fastnesses of deer and pard,
Pindus and Tempe, rhododendron-starred.
Soon, they begin to lift :
Slow partings first, loath arms linked tenderly round rock and clift,
Cold bosoms amorous leaned on armoured crags :
Such long farewells,
Such trailing of white robes o'er black peat-hags,
Silvered with springs and sprent with blue hare-bells ;
Such lingering in dells,
Such shy returns,
Indraughts of valleys wet with drooping ferns ;
And then, auroral, radiantly swift,
They mount in pride
And as a gift,
Leave to the golden day the green hill-side.
Some shreds are caught among the topmost trees ;
Like visible spirits of the silences,

Mist and Cloud.

Succeeding slow with pauseful step, they glide
Across the glittering desert of the air;
Handmaidens fair,
They go to dip their robes in founts of dawn;
Or in pure alabaster pitchers bear
The dewy wine, from forest-wells deep-drawn.

So morning drew my fancy, like the mist,
To follow after;
But in the sullen mountain-top, unkissed,
All Sinai thundered terrible reproof,
And from such whoredoms held himself aloof,
No friend of love or laughter.
Above the gorge
The trees were Titans, the black rocks a forge,
And audibly almost the vapour hissed;
As, unto skiey roof and rafter,
When Jove's lame armourer wrought 'gainst old revolts,
Rolled the dull reek of tempering thunderbolts.

EDEN.

LIGHT as the ascended breath of snow
That climbs into the azure air,
When Himalayan peaks are bare,
And all their gloom-built gullies know
The warmth of spring,—and virginal
As the white paps of Eve unwed
In Eden-bower the blossoms were.
Their pearly lustre, half opaque,
Pied with pink stain and purple strake,
Drank up the liquid light that fed
Their green and leafy coronal.
And in their matrix, the faint stir
Of Life (that fallen Lucifer
In likeness of a creeping snake
Longed for)—no motion made to strew
The ground beneath them; and the dew
Despoiled them not; nor butterfly
Their motionless tranquillity
Bowed; nor light-fingered airs that pass
Let fall one petal on the grass.
So calm it was in Eden bower,
So heavenly calm by bush and brake,

Of beauty that completes the flower
They had not lost a single flake.
But oh, how fugitive and brief
The perfect hour of bud and leaf.
Was it a breeze or a wild bird,
Or the maturer life within,
That first their infant slumber stirred;
Or Eve when bending down her chin
She touched a petal with her breath?
Five petals eddied to the earth;
And straightening out his monstrous girth
Where coiled among the leaves he hid,
Earthwards the watchful Serpent slid,
And made partaker of his mirth
The destined shadow men call Sin,
Who told it to his brother Death.

PORPHYRO.

MUSIC, like the wandering shower,
Whose variable voice is heard
On lawny grass, in leafy bower,
The slumbrous pool of silence stirred.
The trumpet neighs with high fanfare,
The viol deep and violin;
The looped awnings lifted are,
And lo, a world of light within;
A world of light, a world of flame,
That lives and dies to music's beat;
And there upon the waft of fame
Flew Porphyro with wingèd feet.
Hot on the scent the eager pack
May wind the wild deer up the glen,
But who shall tread the dancer's track
That dances on the hearts of men?
The feignèd dreams of false desire
Their fetters round his footsteps wove,
And from beneath, like flakes of fire
On crocus-lawns in Spring-time, clove.

And silent men of secret mien,
Fanned the white skin of Egypt's queen,
Laid on her couch of emerald lawn.
And shyly came the silk-eared Faun,
The fawning Satyr whisked his tail,
With frolic grin and wrinkled mask,
Old Sylvan hopped well-drunk with ale,
And Bacchus squelched his goat-skin cask,
And flower-like nymphs from cloudless calm
Of Cyprian Olympus high,
Came down the slopes of pine and palm
To see him dance and see him die.
And he is but a brown-limbed slave,
And she the hornèd Queen of Night;
She draws him, as the moon the wave,—
He spins, her frantic satellite.
Her lustful heart is full of pride;
Her eyes upon his body feast;
She motions to her dangerous side
Death's Cup-bearer, the mitred priest,
The gilded poison is for thee
That in the golden goblet swims!
Thy frame an arch of agony,
Cold trembling in thy comely limbs.
Die Porphyro!—To this long pause
Have come thy many-wandered feet.—
The people thundered their applause,
The Emperor started to his feet,

Flung roses and a purse of gold.—
But Death, your only realist,
Stole down the wings with whisper cold,
And in my heart a serpent hissed :—
" Better yet, and better yet !
He will do it better yet !
Heap roses, weathe him all the bays
That toilers after fame can get !
In the dark ending of his days,
When none is nigh to blame or praise,
He will do it better yet ! "

THE CROCODILE DISCOURSES.

I DO not find it written in my slime
That God is Love; yet He is very good;
For first, He filed my teeth exceeding sharp,
And shut them in a trap of triple steel,
Gave me my saurian ancestry, whereby
I walk abroad unquestioned armiger,
And wear unrusted my tough coat of mail.
Also, to deck a brother deity
(For I am more than priest if less than God),
He offers lotus buds, and lends me stars
To float upon my pool; and when I swim
On moonless nights they tremble in the wash
And furrow of my wave. Familiar,
As to a schoolboy ciphers on a slate,
I meditate my deep astrology,
Reading the cycles and conjunctive hours
That ripen for my maw the virgin's breasts,
The young wife's womb. They have no time to scream,
I trip so smoothly down the darkling stair
And paddle in the deeps. My pool is called
Silence, the deadener of unseemly noise,
That rends so woundily the clamorous air.
I do not roar like loud and vulgar beasts,

But on a soft bed lay them tenderly,
Striving to calm them, lest they tear the flesh.
There the poor gape, that is their voiceless scream,
No echo has but bubbles. Soft, so soft
The seasoned flesh; the after-dinner sleep,
In reed-brake or thorn-thicket, sanctified
With comfortable closing of the lids
And beatific smile, of blessedness
And the peculiar care of Providence
Humbly acknowledged, sign, misunderstood,
But not the less sincere. Ah, yes, the fool
Hath said "There is no God," but I am wise;
Therefore to Him, who for His servant's food
Fattens the suckling, strews with fin and spawn
My pool, and fills with splash of silver rain,
I give among warm rocks and waterweeds
Amphibious thanks."
Thus far the crocodile,
Reading his thesis theologiæ;
And all admitted it extremely sound.

THE AMBUSH.

"WILD one, wild one, fleeing through the woods,
Your skin is rent with thorns, dark fear is in your eyes."
"A deer was caught by giant snakes with soft and gleaming hoods:
They are winding round her heart until she dies."

"Wild one, wild one, quiet now your heart."
"The doe was white and beautiful, her eyes were fires of pain."
"'Tis bitter, for the chase I willed is ended ere the start:
By strong pursuing hounds I wished her slain."

"Wild one, wild one, break not from me so!
The woods are fierce with hunger, and day has fled the skies,
But in the house is tenderness and dreams." "O, God, I go
From the terror of his hands and hooded eyes!"

STARS.

IN the sharp splendour of a star
We know what timeless souls we are,
And apprehend the uncharted seas
Where throng our gilded argosies.

Freighted with heavy bales of sense
We sail, not knowing why, nor whence,
Nor whither . . . ever thrusting on
Against huge seas, aloof, alone.

THE FLAME.

To John Flanagan.

YOU shall take paint and I take words,
And both shall colour life with dream.
Your thoughts shall glow, and mine, like birds,
Shall sing more proudly than they seem.

Yet we shall never be appeased:
This drouth and hunger of the soul
Is too essential to be eased
With beauty lesser than the whole.

Our five sweet senses shall not slake
The fire that was before we came.
Ah, struggle on for Beauty's sake
And give your flaming heart to flame.

SRÀMOZAN.

(*For a Ballet.*)

SRÀMOZAN sits dying: his slaves stand in silence,
Nubians, Syrians, leashed to his nod.
Death is on his dark brow, with fierce, keen jewels.
Who has heard the treading of the cat-faced god?

Has any one heard? Incense to the sun-chinks
Wreathes. Balconied girls move fans in the gloom—
Ostrich, flamingo and peacock feathers
In that great ivory ebony room.

Has any one heard? A silver-sprung fountain
Flowers in shadow, spirtles and sings
From emerald heads of crested lizards.
Has any one felt his shuddering wings?

Wearily Sràmozan watches a blue monkey
From gold chain swinging, chattering her teeth,
Clenching her paw with loathing of the goldfish
Swift and lustrous in the pool beneath.

Sràmozan.

Heavily he sighs, and looks to the still curtain
Where Sràb stands, huge, with curved, monstrous blade.
" Bring me Saïcha while my eyes have vision
That I may pass the Shadows unafraid."

" The wings stirred then ? " " I heard his velvet treading ! "
Sràmozan starts up with deep hungering eyes.
Saïcha, tinkling, is running past the eunuchs,
Spins on the throne-steps where he dies.

Saïcha, undulant with glittering allurements,
Mimes and quivers to plucked, murmurous strings.
The orange pavement twirls to her rhythm.
Death by the curtain furls his wings.

Sràmozan from his throne of jade and silver
Casts great sapphires and chrysolites down,
Whispering hoarsely praises of the sorceress,
Saïcha, whirling slender and brown.

" See how burningly he gazes upon her ! "
The dance wanes. She sways as a tall lily sways.
" The wings rushed then ! " His tired face is ashen.
Death threads softly the whispering maze.

The dance ends. How like a dying bird she flutters !
Goldenly she falls, and shivers, and is still.
" For the soul of Sràmozan pray, O ye People !
The years are sorrows the gods fulfil."

Sràb moves swiftly. The chattering blue monkey
Squeals, and a girl screams. "Saïcha, arise!
Thy little feet shall go afar with Sràmozan."
The sword smites hissing in a storm of sighs.

"LAUGHING LIONS WILL COME."

THE prophet from his desert cave
Listens to the sound of water
Lapping with tongues the fringes of the sand.
Young flowers open for the bees;
A roadway for the yellow sun
Climbs from the hills into the fallow sea.
The scented bells hold golden sound;
And the strong lion drinks the salted waves,
Cooling his mane within the sudden foam.
The bee skirts tremblingly the shining dew
Looking for honey in the golden dells,
While the lion shakes the loud hills again.
This early morning there may lie some gold
Forgotten when the light was fled;
To-day the great beams may shine
On opened caves where run swift rivers,
Shooting their arrows at the swordless sea,
And blind to the sun whose shining armour
Shows in the sky among the clouds he charges—
Driving them across a wind-walled field
Into the shelter of the towering hills.
Honey may be hiding in the waking flowers;
The man in armour hides behind the gold,
The strongest waves, far off, are snow.

These are dangers to the daring robber,
The armoured impotence of man-made deity,
And crowd-thick, barking heads, on the lion-like sand.
Gathering honey in the rolling desert,
Such are the perils to a fasting prophet—
Dog-like men, and men-like gods.
Many doors lie open into his cave,
For lion-springs, flash of the surging sea,
And dogs that bark to bar him from his palm.
To leave his cave, and walk on the burning sand,
He passes the sun that bridles his yellow mane,
And the roaring crowd, an ocean of clashing waves.
Tight-rope dancers run over the roofs
And fall in the market-place—
Raising a laugh.
It looks like walking on the rainbow's bridge
Among the clouds, behind the windows.
There below fly the flags of smoke
Waving possession that the lord's at home
And works, a creator, in his own fair garden
Where trees spring as fountains, lift into the air
Their branches steadied in the height with wings
That quiver in the stream of wind,
And by the cold are frozen as they drop,
Before they foam again as fiery darts
Piercing the soft breasts of the pool;
They tremble above the water, bird-like, with flashing feathers.

"Laughing Lions Will Come."

Is Zarathustra armoured that he goes
Leaving his cave, down mountains,
Fording swift rivers, to attain the town?
The tight-rope dancers had turned back again
Waving their wands to balance a sharp curve.
They stagger as a child who learns his walk
Using a crutch in place of human hand,
Holding his own high above the head
To guide him on an easy level path;
Guitars are played by men upon high stilts
Stepping over gardens to keep up the tune
Because the dancers only move with music.
With creaking leg and hollow tread
They walk among the houses, chase the rope,
And whisper warning while they play more loud.
Below, the cripples lean out from their corners
And a dwarf or two will strain his little stride
To run like a child holding a strong kite.
This is the magnet drawing every eye
When Zarathustra comes behind the curtain of the gold horizon,
Walks into the town through the deserted gates.
Judges are holding back the wheel of time
Fitting the spokes to figures on a watch
As they follow the competitors on airy paths.
He walks beneath an archway, hears his tread
Multiplied and echoed in this empty hall,
And then is alone again on the empty street.

Stepping out firm, he starts to sing,
Turns the corner and is in the square,—
His song a loud river that now joins the sea.
    Who will he first step up to,
    Take by the shoulder,
    To break down his stare?
Will he stoop down to a dwarf and shout,
Ask him to run across the square
And beg the Mayor to stop festivities a moment?
    Is it too dangerous to hold a stilt,
    Shouting out loud into the noisy air
    To attract attention from a wooden giant?
If he holds a stilt and stops the music
Down will tumble all the tight-rope dancers
And the men who play the mandolines cannot stand still.
    Shout as loud as he possibly can,
    He will never drown the music
    And the roaring crowds.
One course, one only, is there to his hand;
Wonder and marvel are the joys to-day,
And this is the course that he must tread.
    God goes on a cloud,
    But the dancers walk there,
    And the crowd shout louder than the singing of his angels.
  Thinking a moment, Zarathustra stopped,
  Stroked his beard, and hesitated
  Till his mind lit up;

Without a cry, without a word
He started running down the square,
Raced ever quicker till he reached a wall;
No sooner touched it
Than he turned again
Running ever faster than the way he came.
Reached the starting-point,
Turned once more
Raising a dust to hide his face.
The men on stilts looked down like birds
Who watch for prey in the glistening grass,
And dropped the instruments from their hands;
The dancers when the music stopped
Swayed on their ropes
And fell like stars,
Flashed through the air with trailing sparks
And opened on the ground
Their clumsy petals.
The dwarfs and cripples raised themselves,
Came from their corners into dazzling sun
And ran among the crowd to start them running.
Soon Zarathustra showed in front;
Just behind were the men on stilts,
After them the able-bodied ran
Followed by cripples and the bounding dwarfs;
Half of them were running from right to left
While Zarathustra showed from left to right.
Soon he caught the laggards and the limping halt

And ran among their crutches
By the jumping dwarfs.
    This time turning down a narrow street
    He ran into a house
    And climbed the shaking stairs.
Out from the window on a roof he stepped
While the people ran up stairways
Like a flood inside a well;
    Down a drain-pipe on the ground again.
    He heard the tumbling ceilings
    And the roofs fall in.
While the survivors took the road again
Zarathustra ran out from a gate once more
Till he reached the burning sand,
    And fell back breathless
    Blind from the dust
    And dead with running.
Clouds of dust still rose from the town—
Blurred murmurs
And the tread of hundreds running.

"I won attention by my ruse.
Shouting was vain, and had I showed
Floating above them on a cloud
They would have guessed me lowered from a tower
Treading the yielding clouds like a man through snow.
So I had to run among them like a wind.
But for all my running they have never seen

"Laughing Lions Will Come."

The stride of my footsteps,
But thought themselves
Each in each other to contain the cause.
My years of meditation in a cave
Gave more hope for another visit;
But now that they run themselves around the town
Nothing will stop them but themselves alone.
If some one with young lungs
Blew out through a trumpet the last chance for man,
It would be a feature in their entertainment.
I must look at the sun
Who sinks to die
And pours his treasures to the sea to keep,
Guarding them with tempests and a change of tide,
So that in sinking to the sunless caves
Where they lie to light the darkness till he comes again,
The poorest fisherman has golden oars
To row with over the echoing waves
Suddenly shaking their yellow manes
To sound new music to the gods below.
And when the gold is taken from the oars
The music ceases and the waves are mute
Till a new wind whispers from the thirsty trees
And the fisherman can hoist his sail."

ET IN ARCADIA, OMNES.

(From *The Bird-Actors.*)

THE stars, but prophets call them sons of God,
Lay in the fresh field, and the cool wind trod,
Striding, across the bodies where they slept
And woke them to the glory that they kept
All day in bondage until darkness came,
When movement flowed as water, gold as flame.

The gods now rise and let the new light run
Rippling its quick strong life and substance spun
From fluttering wings and fiery breasts of clouds
Along their limbs just risen from the shrouds
Of death-like slumber till they play again;
Blue hills, far island watch them, and the plain.

Above white clouds the stars come from their tent
On which to-day's dead light spills lustre, spent,
And feeble after fiery beams and bars
Have burned the sea with madness, earth with wars,
And made still waters mirror in their glass
The gold hung woods, and gliding clouds that pass,
Dip their tall towers like pennons in the lake
And, hidden from the sun, their thirst they slake

Till, at the time the nightingales begin
The clouds have vanished, and the night is thin.

Now at their settled stations in the sky
The stars are still, or spread their wings to fly,
Are motionless, or moving with their gold
Through Heavens wide as water, and as cold.
Looking between sharp edges of the leaves
Beneath black-shadowed houses, and their eaves
Still shining in the evening rain, there show
Unfolding flowers that tremble as they grow,
And several ships with glittering sails of glass
Swim the blue seas, or float beneath the mass
Of towering cliffs down which the gold men leap,
Cross the wide sands, run down the shelving steep,
Ride on the foam, and climb the golden ropes
Until the soft-breathed wind fulfil their hopes.

Now that the sky is once more set with signs
From balconies above a tree that shines
With fan-like agitation of the wind,
Revolving its lush petals till they bind
Their spinning dance into a formless round,
The people lean and listen to the sound
Of voices parting the dim green, and strings
That wave-like beat their foam upon the wings
Flashing below the crystal fall of song,
Which, melting, drops in music on the throng.

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

From bird-throats kissing the warm air there drops
The mingling of cool snow and flame through stops
Of flute-like tongues that gather fire from light
To make their honey golden to our sight.

. . . . . .

The poorest even have their hour of pleasure
When the daylight fails
And the more advanced young women
Play the piano,
While the more advanced young men
Accompany them with song,
And those who cannot play their part,
Sit in the window.

At a late hour all the voices stop,
The day's perpetual sound is dead,
So still now
That you think the singers
Must still be in that room,
The women sleeping with the half-closed eyes
Of wax-work figures,
And the men as plaster caryatides
Upholding the low roofs of lodging-houses
On their sad crushed heads.
The next few hours are far the best
In which to temper truth with a trite compromise.

In more imaginative lands
Our instruments are still the strings

That carry every trembling confidence
Through a half-open window—
Till, stepping to the water's edge
You see your own tall shadow
In the clear windows of the water
With white pointed mask
Abetting your new self disguised;—
And all the music of the air obeys
The silver presence singing in the trees
And giving time its intervals of lucid silence
While the wind touches the taut strings of the sea,
And the waterfalls of light
Drip through the leaves
Upon the dew-drenched grass.
If such and such sit in the gamut of one's life
Within the same close box of yellow bricks,
Under a mutual roof;
Bow from the windows if you walk beneath
And leash themselves to let you climb the stairs,
Is not a little latitude allowed
For subtle insolence, and half-veiled threats?

Calling through the lattices of leaves
At those wreathed windows
Where, flower-like, the gold light hangs,
Wise birds repeat,
As echoes from cool caves
The words they're taught.

Et in Arcadia, Omnes

A wall of cactus guards the virgin sound
Of piano scales
Ringing the changes
In a small school-room,
And on the black keys
Hammering with the hard beak of woodpeckers
On a moss-grown tree.
From all around young ardent voices
Reiterate the aged sentiments,
While a brave few try the spiral stairs
Spinning like blown smoke to the glittering stars,
Half-lost in the damp breath of clouds
That tarnish the gilt edges of their song.

Through the splintered stillness
Sounds like small animals
Creep from their holes
And from a hundred various heights,
From terraces of all the shaking fields of leaves,
The frail ladders
On which our meaning climbs
Span the blue air
Until they touch the sodden ground.

. . . . . .

Music, that on the stooping sails of wind,
Drifting, divides the distance, and can bind
Those it has chosen with a supple string,
Keeping them motionless to feel her wing,

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

Can negative the constant turn of time
And make long minutes shorter than the chime
Of waters bruising the white foam of waves
Before whose rush the sea-gods seek their caves;
Thus, at the music beating through a wall
Tired limbs revive, and shadows seem the tall
And flashing figures walking by a lake;
Known faces, unknown bodies slowly shake
Their dancing skeletons to normal flesh,
And walking in warm light within a mesh
Of memories that follow on the scent;
The once-again-remembered wishes bent
On embraces, or the easier art of flight;
Centre round persons crushed beneath the might
Of phrases blown like trumpets, but to fall
Deafened by loud sound, stifled by the pall
Of soaring wings too heavy for their weight;
The music, dying, ceases, and the mate
Of every big ambition faints away,
Gone are the dreams, the darkness lives, till day
With staring light rehearses all the ills
Poured down on us each morning from the hills.

But now, before ambition starts its reign
And crowns itself within the sleeping brain,
A fitting altar for a mocking rite,
The hours arrive which offer to our sight
In place of sun motes in a dancing air
The lively brilliance of crowds laid bare,

And in the place of serenading winds,
A surfeiting of subtle sound, that binds
The plumage of the trees and makes them still,
While murmurs run as water from a hill
Down to the valleys where they form a flood,
And rising, fill the veins of trees with blood,
Break the quiet spell, and run their fire along
Thrilling the leaves until they shout the song
Of rolling river and of gliding cloud,
More moving than the sea, and still more proud;
Of boughs fanning the liquid air until
The wind comes back and breathes into each quill
And then, quite suddenly, the birds begin
Throwing their brilliant spirals through the thin
Clear pavers to the vaster vaults of air;
White caravans of clouds are listening there;
The murmurs are soft whispering of men
Drinking the evening fall of coolness, when
The dappled light gives intervals of shade
Arching the light-ribbed dark with shadows made
Of moving shapes, and lattices of green
That trace their sudden sharpness, where, between
Tall houses and the deep-diapered woods
Dim voices meet, and mix their various moods.

The flickering darkness covers as a cloak
Those hidden there, when certain changes broke
The set calm, and lit the still air with fire
Before whose flames the old and ill retire;

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

The beating blood gives wings that flash and lift
To bodies whose young signs of life they sift
From evidence and symbol of decay
To feel the freshened splendour of new day.

Rise from the ashes where you lay so long,
Stand up triumphant, resolute, and strong.
The cowering darkness is as oil to fire
Intended but to multiply your ire,
Your wings must carry you to cleave the cloud
And take the treasure from its castle proud,
Building white bastions above the waves
To hold the icy heart within its caves;
For bribe, the gold upon the glittering trees
Lies there for you, as honey for the bees,
The streams and running currents of the air
Is path and roadway for your footstep there,
And walking then above the wide-stretched land
The flower scents reach their blossoms to your hand;
And now to send a shiver through the leaves
And thrill with melody the gathered sheaves,
Touching the fields beyond the reach of sound
To light the gathered gold upon the ground.
The clouds dissolve and show a sea of glass,
Still islands, and the floating ships that pass.

On earth once more, the music guides your feet,
Annihilating distance till you meet.

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

The moment comes to don your first disguise
And posture it before the sightless eyes
Vast imbecile mentality of those
Who cannot tell a thistle from a rose;
This is for others; but for one, alone,
The altered aspect and the change of tone;
For one alone; yet others in these hours
Show greater changes and more subtle powers.
They glide in carriages past flashing green
Fans, and dropping curtains, liquid with sheen
Of waters, echoing every shaft of light
That fills an avenue too long for sight
Until the gold spoke fits the wheel on high
Moving in majesty along the sky;
From lakes that flash like mirrors or like swords
The echoes send back shuddering sounds and words
And multiply the moving shafts and wells,
Fashion new glory and invent fresh spells
To crack the glass of silence with the tongues
That throw like fountains and have fire for lungs.
They come by water with a white sail, blown
Like a taut cloud, like a gaudy shell shown
Through clear water on the pale plains of sand
As a city with carved towers on gold strand;
Or float more gently, crossing a still world
Using their oars as wings, with wide sails furled,
Make the soft sound of feathers as they dip
To wave the water back and press the lip,

Floating still further on the troubled glass
That shows its secrets, and the mountains' mass.
A wanton warmness breathes on them below
The shaking smoothness, and white bodies show
That ride the slight waves holding to the manes;
Men on galloping horses down the plains.
Clearer water shows the fine limbs that tempt
The dwellers in wild places, rough, unkempt;
If such there were who lived among these woods
Crowding upon the bank, they'd fire their moods
And carry a white body to the caves
To catch the cataracting force of waves,
And gratify the unaccustomed touch;
Soothe with cool snow of limbs the heat, of such
Blind, flower-like, followers who track the sun
And know the causeways where his feet have run
Treading through clear clouds the tree-tops, below
He dyes the leaves with brilliance to show
The glittering windows and the shining roofs,
Pavilions that tremble as his hoofs
Sound in the orchards where he stoops to hang
Gold apples on high trees through which there rang
Laughter like dropping water, till, sweet tears,
The rain showers fell to dissipate their fears;
Small suffering and short-lived pain distil
This elixir of happiness, and still
Among the drums and crystal gongs of rain
Voices are calling and we know the rain

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

Is ended, and the brilliant fruit begin
To grow to fulness and to paint their skin.
Daring the danger and the treacherous shore,
They swim above the never-plundered store
Of shadows, where the finished cup of sky
Contains the waters, and the hills so high,
They touch the trees that wave on the far bank,
And shake the mirrored stillness of their rank.
Green are the safest places in the grass
To hide your comfort from the feet that pass,
And little caves between the trees' green dark
Give you their stillness, and no need to hark
For prying voices, while near music rings
To keep the people practising their wings,
For while they tread the tight-rope of the tune
And walk on air, through clouds, as if to prune
These flowers which grow in clusters high above
The leaf-marked waters, lying there to prove
The strength of silver, or the lure of gold
As night or day, with cowardly or bold
Appearance bribes with white flowers the waves
Or, with fierce countenance controls his slaves;
Others can rest motionless, apart,
Until the moment for their play can start;
In "caverns," "leaf-hung bowers," or "grots" they lie,
And live their pastorals before the shy
Pipes or piercing trumpets make this pretence
No longer binding, and no more a fence.

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

From other windows, other gods may lean,
Their sons mark space with intervals of clean
Waterfalls of rippling light, golden walls
Protecting proud gods, echo through their halls
New signs and symbols acted in the air,
Unknown to us, but seen by clear eyes there;
And from the windows each can watch his son
Leave Heavens of sparkling brilliance, to shun
The drifting gardens with sweet-breathing trees
Blown down the wide sky; for they choose the lees
And sifted dregs of goodness where they find
Sweet fruits of conquest, and of loss, combined.

As soon as ever the deep woods are still,
The hollow valley, and the hanging hill
Murmur with liquid voices, till in turn
The woods reply with fiery sounds that burn
And cleanse the dim night, for the gods to reach
Trees rising like green cliffs above a beach.
The carriages arrive, release their load
Beneath green arches, where the grass is mowed
Smooth as the sea, and through its depth as clear;
The leaves, like men on cliffs, can gaze down sheer
And watch, beneath the dancing boughs of waves,
People leaving carriages like caves,
Step into the sunlight, for a moment blind,
Dazed by the dropping splendour that they find,

Et in Arcadia, Omnes.

They stagger like men in the far-flung spray
Of the shivered waves on a stormy day,
But the foam falling like snow down the air
Is dust in wide beams of the sun, whose hair
Gilds the blue zenith that he leaps along
With lion-like limbs and loud voice so strong.

A SWISS RHAPSODY.

To the Native, Miss Frieda Widmer.

LAUSANNE Station. 10.42. 9.42?
Vevey Platform. 10.18. 9.18?
Clock-work God who regulates this brew,
Think where your passengers have been!
Three different times. Three separate stages.
Living, comatose or dead.
On far-off continents, or under clouds
Through showers of rain, in golden searchlights
Pouring down to show the circle in the triangle,
The rolling wheels of clocks set in the pyramids and spires.
I see a town half-way between
This station and the-one we've left,
And that yields yet another time
Completing the set quadrature.
Then this is North, East, South and West.
Before I've time to think again,
Taking a passport and a bag
I jump a barrier and run.
I choose a bearing and a cab
And drive along an avenue,
Five francs, desk, key, 348,
And then I take my slippers and a dressing-gown

A Swiss Rhapsody.

I thought I'd interrupted Ezra
Bathing in this Swiss Hotel,
I looked again and saw it was
An avalanche that fell.
A mound of flesh, a gush of hair,
A soul imprisoned in white tiles,
But none the less I dreamed, I knew,
And sure enough, my dreams came true.

To the Tune of the March from "William Tell."

I am sure you will think that I say too much
When I tell of the snow, and a heat so fierce
So hot was the water when I turned the tap,
I declare I forgot these were winter months.
It was dark, but a new moon marked the skies, I'm sure that I saw it through the glass,
I left the water, and took a towel, and tried to find it, but the glass was thick,
Slipped on the floor, missed the mat, and fell, till at last I got up, too late to know,
They rang a bell, and I seized my clothes, for I knew that they served table d'hôte but once.
I was right . . . and I lost . . . I was late . . . they were cruel . . .
. . . It was cold . . . not enough . . . they refused . . . and I left . . .
I went to the window, below lay the lake
And the lights of the town shone out through the night.

A Swiss Rhapsody.

I said to myself, shall I buy some milk,
To drink with the chocolate that they sell?
The shops were shut . . . it was past ten
Judging by the average time;
I was left hungry all that night,
No use to grumble till the light;
I went to bed and tried hard to sleep,
But was prevented by a thirst,
I dreamed of icebergs served with spoons
And felt a chagrin at their loss;
So hungry, so weary, the gold sky-signs
Sang of a sixpenny cure for the world;
Just then I recovered, awoke, and remembered
The fresh light flooded the curtained room.

The shepherd sang songs on the hills,
The valleys echoed crystal bells,
They answered many morning prayers
And glided down the mountain rills.

Editor's Note.—A letter from the Native, in appreciation of this poem, will be found at the end of the book.

PROFITEER WILLIAMSON PURSUES CULTURE.

THE orange and vermilion lights
Twinkle among the indigo trees,
Williamson in violet tights
Converses with the blonde marquise.

Troops of parrots madly squawk,
Streaming out of Africa.
" Madame la marquise, will you walk
Serenely into Asia ? "

Evidence of rumbling gongs,
Peacock silk and porcelain.—
Fat Jewesses roaring songs
Surge and squeeze down Petticoat Lane.

All the lanterns gaily swing,
All the gongs and all the drums.—
" Madame, hear these maidens sing
Poignant lyrics of the slums ! "

" Shall we be grotesque ?—and why,
Madame, do you stint your mirth ?
In my country's service I
Earned my bulbousness and girth."

Tropical and sultry note
In the night blared suddenly.—
" Parrot, your conspicuous coat
Is but protective mimicry !

Shall we indeed await the dawn,
Or something else to talk about?"—
The blonde marquise to hide a yawn
Puts delicate lilac fingers out.

Williamson grows old again—
Stares down at his sagging paunch.
Dew is falling; a sudden pain
Pierces his rheumatic haunch.

Rolling ships approaching port,
Coloured seamen wreathed in smiles,
Apes and birds of every sort
Brought from garish, tropic isles.

Coloured seamen leave the sea.—
Williamson becomes absurd.—
"Coloured men, oh come to me!
I will purchase many a bird!"

Lanterns out and music dumb,
And the rain descending fast.—
"Madame, if you will not come,
I shall leave you to your past.

Everyone has gone to bed."—
"Would that I were every one!"—
"There is nothing to be said"—
"There is nothing to be done."

CAFÉ CONFIDENCES.

COFFEE—Cigarettes—Thick blue air—
Restless walls heaving themselves about in discreet
anglified cubism.
On the other side of the little table you were
A smouldering spark and a thicket of black hair.
And you talked—a farrago of considered cynicism.

If coffee be the food of love, say on !—
There will be good men yet in Kensington !—
Singular young woman, how you rattle on !
What do you think about when you are alone?
Kensington bored you, the Slade formed you.
Gloomy young woman of the Café, what make you here?
You should be picking buttercups in Devonshire.

You were saying?—" considered as an anodyne,
Brandy has qualities not found in wine.—
If I am an intellectual, then I am an intellectual.
I can't help it, can I?

Anyhow, what does it matter? The world will go round
just the same.
It is just a silly game. Life gets flatter and flatter.
I contemplate it all with the vacant grin
Of an infant or an idiot. I shall soon be old.
Shall I soak my sick soul in a tumbler of gin?
My grandfather sold butter and cream in Tavistock market.
He fell in the road when he was drunk,
And all the wheels of all the carts from Tavistock market
Rolled gaily over him.

Good old grandpapa! He had his spree
Each market-day for centuries.—Who would have thought
He'd help to put on the market a thing like me?
Sometimes I laugh about it quite a lot!"

IMMANENCE.

IT is not only savour that does arise
From that field whither the gulls follow the plough.
The colour is not but colour, also quick
Token of raw life, red-brown, a promise of
Yield, earth passionate, clamouring to be sown.
Earth salacious, genetrix of comical
Worms and larvæ, Earth laughing at the people,
She quiet, they vexed, litigating for her.
Earth faithful nursing men with her milk of grain.
Earth wanton in dangerous green of fat worts,
Jewels, the flowers at her body's curves and
Hollows, at mating month, the groupèd flowers
Little yellow-frilled mouths that smell of white wine.
Earth austere, submitting to the frosty rods
Of January, defensive of her seed.
Earth riddle maker under unlimited
Stars, the god's eyes, pulling our souls down to her
For her beauty, heart-breaking, now darkly seen,
Now illumin'd, now gone. Earth whom cities do
Explain a little, conquer not: godmother
With gold and unexpected wells assuaging.

Immanence.

Queen of green-haired tree spirits, and the spirits
Of boulders, the robed in lichen, of still pools
Where a wicked shadow is chained to the floor
For punishment, of turfy downs: Hecate,
Ephesian Dian, slim Adonis the chaste,
Priape; deliberate, of seeming caprice,
The brooding one, looking alway to show forth
More life and godhead, in metamorphosis
Giving the resurrection of the body.
Earth pungent, of unknown fury and desire
In the green-growing things as much as beasts hunting
Disposer (who proves not?) of souls departed.

THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

DODEKASYLLABICS.

THE garments of the King's daughter are of wrought gold.
First, armour-heavy, her cloak of yellow plaques;
Each have diff'rent gravure; chelydri, chimaerae,
Sphinxes joined in battle, lycanthropes in love;
The eyes are jewels, red or green, scales of nacre,
Claws platinum inlaid. It is fringed with sapphires.

Within her dress is one piece crushing the breasts to
Mountains marble white with wand'ring veins like blue ore.
It is harsh with the cruelty of a thousand
Diamonds sewn in cusps and volutes and arabesques.
Harsher the intimate garments against her skin
Woven in fine gold wire. (Her skin is like orchid.)

More penitential than the horse-hair shirt. As she
Moves each point of gold chafes or pierces her white flesh;
Yet proud, she bows, suffering from her palanquin
(The Ethiops who carry it with huge muscles
Suffer less). How gold and white against their black!

But the little women pandemic, whose one shift
In blue with white stripes, shews the generous freedom
Of round limbs stained apricot (and as downy and
Warm as one ripening at midday) feeling the
Torrid dust barefooted, jeer after her "Long live
Princess Sarcophagus, who for all her gold is
Charnel, a byword for the young men of the town."

LOVE LYRIC.

I SOMETIMES love you as a convert, on the bench of penitents weeping, loves the stream of raw benediction that floods away his sin, shuddering in the delight of cleanness. At other times as a capriped, chasing you in the sunshine along a lonely, level beach, where my hoof-points send the brazen sand and brown-green fucus scattering; till I leap at you, grinning, fighting for breath, while you cling to the ground at first like a limpet, gasping in a way that suggests a giggle or a sob.

Sometimes I want, with you, to hire little back rooms, where the paper is torn downward like hangnails, for an hour.

On days when it is cold, and there is a great deal of business at the office, I don't love you at all.

THE DAHLIA.

INDOLENT in crimson plush the dahlia blooms beside the wall,
Flaring soon after dawn on mist transmuted into motes of brass;
Like a mistress whom the years made terrible, and stark, and tall,
She burns, loosening the slight but acrid smell of dahlias;
Or like a star that is a mouth with many lips in puckered lust,
To drink the decadence of gold in foliage doomed to winter dust.

THE SOUL'S DEFENCE.

THE soul has four gates to her hall
Set to the four points cardinal:
The first is the gate Boreal,
The second gate Oriental,
The third gate Meridional,
The fourth, the gate Occidental.
Now when these strong winds do arise
Which encompass all paradise
From the starless caves which see
Neither God, nor his enemy,
Winds braggart, winds most terrible
That in a whining tune do tell
Of domed blue vaults so vast, that He
Loses from his inventory
Many lost souls, and thinks them free,
Or obscene winds an entry seek
With suppliant clamour, soft and thick,
Then in fear, and then in hate,
She shuts her steel, her silver gate,
Her gate of brass, her gate of gold
Against these burning winds and cold,
Ghostly enemies without form,
Brewers of mischief in a storm,

Who gabble in a wicked tongue
When all sky is overhung
With dull clouds and yellow scars,
Sinister masters of the stars.
Yet, if she be no prudent soul,
But wanton, and conceiv'd a fool,
She will admit such as do think
For nothing but their meat and drink,
Who would defile her house until,
Mocking her, they take their fill
Of her, consuming utterly
More than her feeble harlotry,
Slake themselves with all, and leave
Nothing behind, nothing to grieve,
Nothing but what is wreck'd and marr'd,
The dead shadow, the broken shard,
That messengers before the day
Mercifully will sweep away.

THE TOILETTE OF MYRRHINE.

SIESTA time is hot in Hell!
Down the glittering shutters fell
With a noise Arabian
Like the rustling pearls that fan

The eyes of rajahs when they hide
Beyond the incense-flowing tide
Their majesty, all lonely save
For the hot Nubian sun, their slave.

And like the lovely light gazelles
Walking by deep water-wells,
Shadows past her mirrors fleet
Through bright trellises of heat.

Through the shutters fawning crept
A barber zephyr, cringing stept
Through the shutters fallen like water—
Hiding Hell's most lovely daughter.

The sun, a ripened apricot,
Still made the flattened roof-tops hot,
And at her table preened and set
Myrrhine sits at her toilette.

The Toilette of Myrrhine.

" Madame Myrrhine, if you please,"
Fawning said the barber breeze,
" I will coiff as light as air
That Arabian wind your hair.

Never had the perfumed seas
Such bright grape-black curls as these
Fallen like rustling pearls that run,
Burnt by the hot Nubian sun,

From each elephantine trunk
The waterfalls rear." Myrrhine shrunk,
But now the barber zephyr curls
Black cornucopias of pearls.

Upon the dressing-table, heat
Is flaunting like a parokeet,
And in the street dust-white and lean,
Two black apes bear her palanquin.

Through the shutters see those apes'
Eyes like green and golden grapes . . .
Their falsetto voices made
A false simian serenade.

The negress Dinah through unheard
Shutters like the sun's gold gourd
Bears her powder-puff—the breath
Of an angel, a swan's death.

The Toilette of Myrrhine.

Never once Myrrhine replies
To those apes with slanting eyes . .
She died a thousand years ago—
From dust her beauty ripened slow.

But Fanfreluche her parrot closes
With the ballerina roses—
Pecks them,—Dinah longs to snatch
The night to make her beauty-patch.

EIGHT MORE BUCOLIC POEMS.

I

EVENING.

PRINCE ABSOLAM and Sir Rotherham Redde
Rock on a rocking-horse home to bed

With dreams like cherries ripening big
Beneath the frondage of each wig.

In a flat field on the road to Sleep
They ride together, a-hunting sheep

That like the swan-bright fountains seem;
Their tails hang down as meek as a dream.

Prince Absolam seems a long-fleeced bush,
The heat's tabernacle, in the hush

And the glamour of eve, when buds the dew
Into bright tales that never come true;

And as he passes a cherry-tree
Caught by his long hair, bound is he,

While all his gold fleece flows like water
Into the lap of Sir Rotherham's daughter.

Come then, and sit upon the grass
With cherries to pelt you as bright as glass—

Vermilion bells that sound as clear
As the bright swans whose sighing you hear

When they float to their crystal death
Of water, scarcely plumed by the breath

Of air,—so clear in the round leaves
They look, this crystal sound scarce grieves

As they pelt down like tears fall'n bright
From music or some deep delight.

The gardener cut off his beard of bast
And tied up the fountain-tree, made it fast

And bound it together till who can see
Which is Prince Absolam, which is the tree?

Only his gold fleece flows like water
Into the lap of Sir Rotherham's daughter;

Sir Rotherham Redde gathers bags of gold
Instead of the cherries ruddy and cold.

II

THE FIVE MUSICIANS.

To Osbert.

THE blue-leaved fig-trees swell with laughter,
Gold fissures split the ripe fruits after,

And like a gold-barred tiger, shade
Leaps in the darkness that they made.

The long-ribbed leaves shed light that dapples
Silenus like a tun of apples.

Gold-freckled, fruit-shaped faces stare
At nymphs with bodies white as air.

The ancient house rocked emptily:
"Horned brothers, creep inside and see

Through my tall windows: the abode
Of noise is on the dusty road."

They creep . . . strange hands are on the hasp . . .
Silenus sleepy as a wasp

Amid the fruit-ripe heat as in
An apricot or nectarine,

Replies, " The dust is wise and old. . . .
For glistening fruits and Ophir's gold

Are gathered there to wake again
In our flesh, like a tune's refrain."

The five musicians with their bray
Shatter the fruit-ripe heat of day;

Their faces wrinkled kind and old
Are masked by the hot sun with gold;

Like fountains of blue water, gush
Their beards. Strange-feathered birds that hush

Their song, move not so proud as these
Smiles floating, ageless courtesies.

They stand upon the dust outside;
Their tunes like drops of water died.

Yet still we hear their slow refrain,
" King Pharaoh, gay lad, come again!"

Miss Nettybun, beneath the tree,
Perceives that it is time for tea

And takes the child, a muslined moon,
Through the lustrous leaves of afternoon.

And tea-time comes with strawberry
Jam,—yet where, oh, *where*, is she?

On that music floating, gone
To China and to Babylon;

Never again she'll go to bed
In the house of Sir Rotherham Redde!

III

KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR MAID.

To Alan Porter.

THE five-pointed crude pink tinsel star
Laughed loudly at King Cophetua;

Across the plain as black as mind
And limitless, it laughed unkind

To see him whitened like a clown
With the moon's flour, come in a golden crown.

The moon shone softer than a peach
Upon the round leaves in its reach;

The dark air sparkled like a sea—
The beggar maid leaned out through a tree

And sighed (that pink flower-spike full of honey),
"Oh, for Love, ragged as Time, with no money!"

Then through the black night the gardener's boy,
As sunburnt as hay, came whispering, "Troy

Long ago was as sweet as the honey-chimes
In the flower-bells jingling into rhymes,

And, oh, my heart's sweet as a honey-hive
Because of a wandering maid, and I live

But to tend the pale flower-bells of the skies
That shall drop down their dew on her sleeping eyes."

IV

CLOWN ARGHEB'S SONG.

CLOWN ARGHEB the honey-bee
Counted his money, " See
In the band-stand in Hell,
Buzzing, the tunes that fell
Raise up glass houses, round
Serres chaudes as forcing ground
Lest bald heads harden
In Hell's kitchen garden.
Poet and pedagogue
Bump their bald heads agog—
(Melon and marrow,
And cucumber narrow).
Next day comes Proserpine,
Parasol raised, and ' See,
Ma'am,' says the gardener, ' these
Thoughts are as thick as peas ! ' "
So sighed the clown, singing
Buzz, and still clinging
To no horizontal bars,
But the pink freezing stars !

V

FLEECING TIME.

QUEEN VENUS, like a bunch of roses,
Fat and pink that splashed dew closes,

Underneath dark mulberry trees,
Wandered with the fair-haired breeze.

Among the dark leaves preening wings
Sit golden birds of light; each sings,

"Will you accept the blue muslin?"
As they peck the blackamoor mulberries' skin.

Then came a sheep like a sparkling cloud;
"Oh, ma'am, please, ma'am, sleek me proud,

Come fleece and comb my golden wool,
And do not mind, ma'am, if you pull!"

Her flocks came thick as the mulberries
That grow on the dark, clear mulberry trees,

As thick as the daisies in the sky . . .
Prince Paris, Adonis; as each passed by,

She cried, "Come feed on buds as cold
As my fleeced lamb-tailed river's gold,

And you shall dance like each golden bird
Of light that sings in dark trees unheard.

And you shall skip like my lamb-tailed river,
In my buttercup fields for ever."

The lady Venus, with hair thick as wool,
Cried, "Come and be fleeced,—each sheepish fool!"

VI

THE HIGHER SENSUALISM.

QUEEN CIRCE, the farmer's wife at the Fair,
Met three sailor-men stumping there,

Who came from the parrot-plumed sea, Yeo-Ho!
And each his own trumpet began to blow.

"We come," said they, "from the Indian seas,
All bright as a parrot's feathers, and these

Break on gold sands of the perfumed isles,
Where the fruit is soft as a siren's smiles,

And the sun is as black as a Nubian.
We have singed the beard of the King of Spain. . . .

Then we wandered once more on the South Sea strand
Where the icebergs seem Heavenly Mansions fanned

By the softest winds from the groves of spice,
And the angels like birds of paradise

Flit; there we caught this queer-plumaged boy
(An angel, he calls himself) for a toy."

. . . . . .

The angel sighed. "Please, ma'am, if you'll spare
Me a trumpet, the angels will come to the Fair,

For even an angel must have his fling,
And ride on the roundabout, in the swing!"

She gave him a trumpet, but never a blare
Reached the angels from Midsummer Fair,

Though he played, "Will you hear a Spanish lady,"
And "Jack the Sailor," "Sweet Nelly," "Trees shady"—

For only the gay hosannas of flowers
Sound, loud as brass bands, in those heavenly bowers.

Queen Circe, the farmer's wife, said, "I will buy
Your plumaged coat for my pig to try—

Then with angels he'll go a-dancing hence,
From sensuality into sense!"

The Fair's tunes like cherries and apricots
Ripened; the angels danced from their green grots;

Their hair was curled like the fruit on the trees. . . .
Rigaudon, sarabande, danced they these.

And the pig points his toe and he curves his wings,
The music starts and away he flings—

Dancing with angels all in a round,
Hornpipe and rigaudon on the Fair's ground.

VII

FALSETTO SONG.

BETWEEN the hairy leaves trills dew
All tasting of fresh green anew,
And, baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird-songs seem, suspended where
Like any feathered shrieking biped
Or creaking water brightly striped
I stand and let my laughter flare
Beneath my waspish gilded hair.
My tame asses' tee-hee-hee
Mimics the striped zebra sea
As it munches all the land—
The real ground whereon we stand:
"No eagle was it, but a hen
Pecked Prometheus' fire-heart when
Counting chicks before they hatched
The farmer's gay wife left unlatched
The door of the crazy hen-coop Laughter—
Never closing ever after!"

VIII

THE FAT WOMAN.

THE velvet-black trees just behind
Have cast no shadow on my mind;
My whirring gilt hair, clear as flutes,
Seems cornucopias of fruits;
That negroid satyr the hot wind
With his long fingers cannot find
His way among my chins, whose shapes
Seem bunches of hot glowing grapes.—
The roses blaze like scarlet fire,
The ivy leaves are black as ire
And bird songs are suspended there
Like coloured hoops upon the air
Through which reverberate the lights
In splintered glassy stalactites—
Those lights that sting me waspishly
As by the gentian-coloured sea
I amble, waves of coloured flesh
Fantastically curled afresh.
I amble past, I muse and see
The placid world's rotundity

The Fat Woman.

Made in my image, fat and round
And matronly; the shy rebound
Of space from contact seems to me
The most sincere of flattery—
A virtuous vacancy that thieves
All colour from the world that lives—
Yields like my mind where nought can make
The least impression it will take.

PRESS CUTTINGS.

The Saturday Review.—"The vanguard of British poetry. They are a portent."

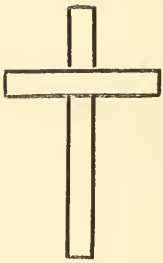
The Nation.—"Harpies like nightingales, and nightingales like harpies, chirping balefully upon the walls of old Babylon."

The Lancet.—"We are sorry about the appendix! . . . Anything to give pain!"

Pall Mall Gazette.—"Conceived in morbid eccentricity, and executed in fierce factitious gloom."

Morning Post.—"We have no doubt whatever that, fifty years hence, the publication of 'Wheels' will be remembered as a notable event in the inner history of English Literature."

Weekly Dispatch (former literary régime).—"The publication of 'Wheels' is regarded by all right-minded people as more a society event than a literary one." [Editor's Note.—My dear Sir, if you lived in Bayswater, as I do, you would realise how perfectly charming you have been!]



R.I.P. TOPSY JONES,

Who died defending " A Common Cause."

(Editor's Note.—*Very.*)

1919.

" Your memory is like a well-loved book
Wherein we go continually to look."

(Editor's Note.—The memorial verse is from the lady's published translations, and was once, alas, poor youth, Albert Samain.)

A TRAGEDY OF REACTION.

It was a super-poet of the neo-Georgian kind
Whose fantasies transcended the simple bourgeois mind,
And by their frank transgression of all the ancient rules
Were not exactly suited for use in infant schools.

But, holding that no rebel should shrink from fratricide,
His gifted brother-Georgians he suddenly defied,
And in a manifesto extremely clear and terse
Announced his firm intention of giving up free verse.

The range of his reaction may readily be guessed
When I mention that for Browning his devotion he confessed,
Enthroned above the Sitwells the artless Muse of "Bab,"
And said that Marinetti was not as good as Crabbe.

At first the manifesto was treated as a joke,
A boyish ebullition that soon would end in smoke;
But when he took to writing in strict and fluent rhyme
His family decided to extirpate the crime.

Two scientific doctors declared he was insane,
But likely under treatment his reason to regain;
So he's now in an asylum, where he listens at his meals
To a gramophone recital of the choicest bits from
"Wheels."

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Aldous Huxley. *THE BURNING WHEEL.*

Published by B. H. Blackwell.

"Without any doubt an original poet."—*The Nation.*

THE DEFEAT OF YOUTH.

Published by B. H. Blackwell.

"The best thing in Mr. Huxley's new volume is . . . 'The Defeat of Youth.' The later poems in the book belong to his subjective-eccentric period wherein . . . lies are notable epigrammatists."—*The Nation.*

"Mr. Huxley is a poet whom it is as difficult to praise outright as it is to overlook him altogether. . . . If Mr. Huxley could abandon his search for the rarer emotions for rareness' sake, and if he could be a little less ingenious all round, he would be a better poet."—*Land and Water.*

"Mr. Huxley's great merit is that he does not attempt to conceal his sophistication. His great defect is that the degree of his sophistication is rather overwhelming.

"His verse is truly elegant. Its rhythms are good, it is incisely phrased, it is devoid of clichés, it is often ironically witty and often originally and agreeably coloured.

" It would be possible to demonstrate his power to write beautifully and well from almost any page in his volume." —*The New Statesman.*

" Mr. Huxley is a poet who focuses his mind without stint into verse, a process which has its dangers; but his mind is so richly stored and so quickly receptive that the result never lacks interest. . . . It is clear that any idea or emotion that comes to him has the best possible chance of surviving beautifully."—*The Times.*

LEDA. Just Published. CHATTO AND WINDUS.

LIMBO. Just Published. CHATTO AND WINDUS.

Sherard Vines. *THE TWO WORLDS.*
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. . . seems to me a pretty satisfying one . . . They were the first Englishmen of letters to exhibit the war in the dress in which generations of their countrymen will assuredly see it. . . . They, and they alone, subduing their artists' sense to this debt of service to humanity, but giving it also its due vesture of grace and freedom in expressing to unthinking, unhearing England what it meant."—*The Nation* (Wayfarer).

"Irony has been an art lost this long while to English letters. Mr. Sitwell has found it, has established it, has triumphed in a medium of all the most difficult to the English sense. . . . He is elegant, suave, restrained—and mighty. 'Iron, cold iron, is master of men all.' He has avoided the easy mistake of making it hot and soft."—*Daily Herald.*

"Mr. Osbert Sitwell has a rich and fantastic imagination. The section called 'The Phœnix Feasters' is brimful of beauty and brightness."—Miss Rose Macauley in the *Daily News.*

"In all the volume there is not a poem but counts because of its intellectual and emotional content."—*Birmingham Post.*

"Captain Sitwell in his combative moods is one of the swiftest pursuers of Mrs. Grundy."—*Times Literary Supplement.*

"There is a big hatred in this young man for facts which many respectable folks accept either with a half-hidden eagerness or with a shrug of the shoulders. . . .

He is a wit and a scourge and a genuine poet. . . . He can make your blood curdle (unless you have made too much money out of the war) with his terrible picture of 'The Modern Abraham,' a piece of grim satire, suitably dedicated to his friend and fellow poet, Siegfried Sassoon." *Bystander.*

Sacheverell Sitwell. *THE PEOPLE'S PALACE.*

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"The Mayor of Murcia is almost unreadable for dullness." —Jones (Miss Topsy) in *A* (or *The*) *Common Cause.*

"The word 'dire' shows real observation and imagination. It illuminates—it is the word one might have thought of and didn't."—Jones (Miss Topsy) in *A* (or *The*) *Common Cause.* [Editor's Note.—Hoity-toity, Topsy Jones!]

Our Stylists

The People's Palace purports to be a collection of verse by Sacheverell Sitwell. Its sheer inanity is beyond description. The audacity of wasting precious paper, to say nothing of printing ink, on such unadulterated drivel take (*sic*) one's breath away."—*The World.*

Edith Sitwell. *CLOWN'S HOUSES.*

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" Miss Sitwell's verses may remind some people of the Italian Comedy seen through a distorting mirror. . . . The Italian Comedy is a little formula that will contain a very large bulk of life, and . . . Miss Sitwell's performing matter has mind behind it. We convolute and spiralize, but somebody has hold of the strings. . . . Her method has to a certain extent been a cockshy for the trumpery reviewer, but inasmuch as she does not use it either perversely or to exploit her personality, we rather admire her courage than deprecate the chosen vessel of its wrath." —*The Nation.*

" If by a chance, which is not so improbable as appears, Miss Sitwell's teapot reminded her first of the Tower of London and then of Joan of Arc, she would say so without hesitation or consistency. . . . For the most part, we believe that she is trying her best to be honest with her own conceptions, and, that being so, she is of course perfectly right not to care whether they appear outlandish."—*Times Literary Supplement.*

" She is a poet for whose poetry the taste must emphatically be acquired. What seemed like imaginative madness shows on acquaintance much method."—*The Oxford Chronicle.*

" Miss Sitwell can write Fêtes Galantes and perverted nursery rhymes as well as any poet alive."—*New Statesman.*

" Miss Sitwell is best and most herself when she dances a graceful grotesque *pas seul* of absurdities, using rhyme—as Mr. Duhamel puts it, ' pour taper du talon les pas d'une petite danse qui s'en accommode,' and ' pour mettre des talons rouges dans une fête galante.' "—*The Saturday Westminster Gazette.*

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Edith Sitwell. *THE WOODEN PEGASUS.*

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Letter from the Native to the Editor of "Wheels" re "The Swiss Rhapsody."

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"DEAR MISS EDITH,

Juste I received the lovely poème from Mr. Sacheveril about Switzerland when he was traveling from Italie through Simplon Lausanne Genève. Really I am enjoying very much to read this poème there I am Native from this Country. Since like Schiller the great poet from Germany when he was travelling in the woundervoll Lake from Lucerne and write this work from Wilhelm Tell. I should be very pleased when to have some more poèm from Mr. Sachvell Sitwell about Switzerland.

"I am remain,

"Your sincerely,

"FRIEDA WIDMER."

NOTE.—The Editor of "Wheels" will shortly answer *all* the attacks in a pamphlet to be published separately. The attackers are properly in for it.

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